



SUMMER SUN SPOTS
By LAWTON PARKER

Two American Artists Distinguished Abroad: Lawton Parker and C. Arnold Slade

By ROWLAND SHELDON

LAWTON PARKER enjoys the distinction of being the only American awarded first medal by the Society of French Artists, when he secured the highest honor at the hands of the *Societe des Artistes Francais* for the best painting of the year 1913. James William Patterson in an article in the September issue of the FINE ARTS JOURNAL under the title of "Many Sorts of Realism" compared the Work of Mr. Parker to the best artists of the day. Later in the December issue in

which we illustrate his medal picture "*La Paresse*" he writes of him as follows:

"There were four hundred and twenty-three entries at the Twenty-sixth Annual Exhibition of American Art, and the showing was a very superior one. In reviewing so many works for art we look first for something remarkable and conspicuous, that makes for individuality and holds the attention. There is no exceptional picture here except the nude of Mr. Parker, call "*La Paresse*." It is not necessary that one

should be overwhelmingly carried away with this painting; tastes differ and some will like it more than others, but as a piece of painting it surely will stand very high in the estimation of every one, because so remarkably carried out to the last detail. There are pictures here which suggest the heat of the blood-flow of their painters, in which the pigments are flung about so excitingly and speak of such intense earnestness and enthusiasm that we in turn become excited in studying them. But Parker's nude figure is anxiously worked even to the uttermost extremities. It is natural that a jury of artists should give prizes to completed paintings, where no spot exists unattended to, where the eye glides over the surface of the canvas and finds every inch perfect. So the Paris Salon jury gave a gold medal to Mr. Parker on the strength of his highly completed work. Heretofore, while Americans

have secured medals from time to time, no American has received this special gold medal, so Mr. Parker is the leader in this line and the movement is a very important one."

The human side of Mr. Parker is well handled by a life long friend in an article written for Collier's Weekly, which I take the liberty of quoting:

"In 1913 for the first time in its history the Societe des Artistes Francais bestowed its highest honor, the first medal, upon a painter who is not a Frenchman. The Old Salon, to give it its popular name, is the most important institution of its sort in the world, and its first medal, often not



EARLY MORNING
By LAWTON PARKER

awarded at all during considerable periods of years, is the highest academic decoration that any painter can attain. This first foreigner to whom they have awarded it is Lawton Parker, an American—an intensely American American, too, which makes it more interesting.

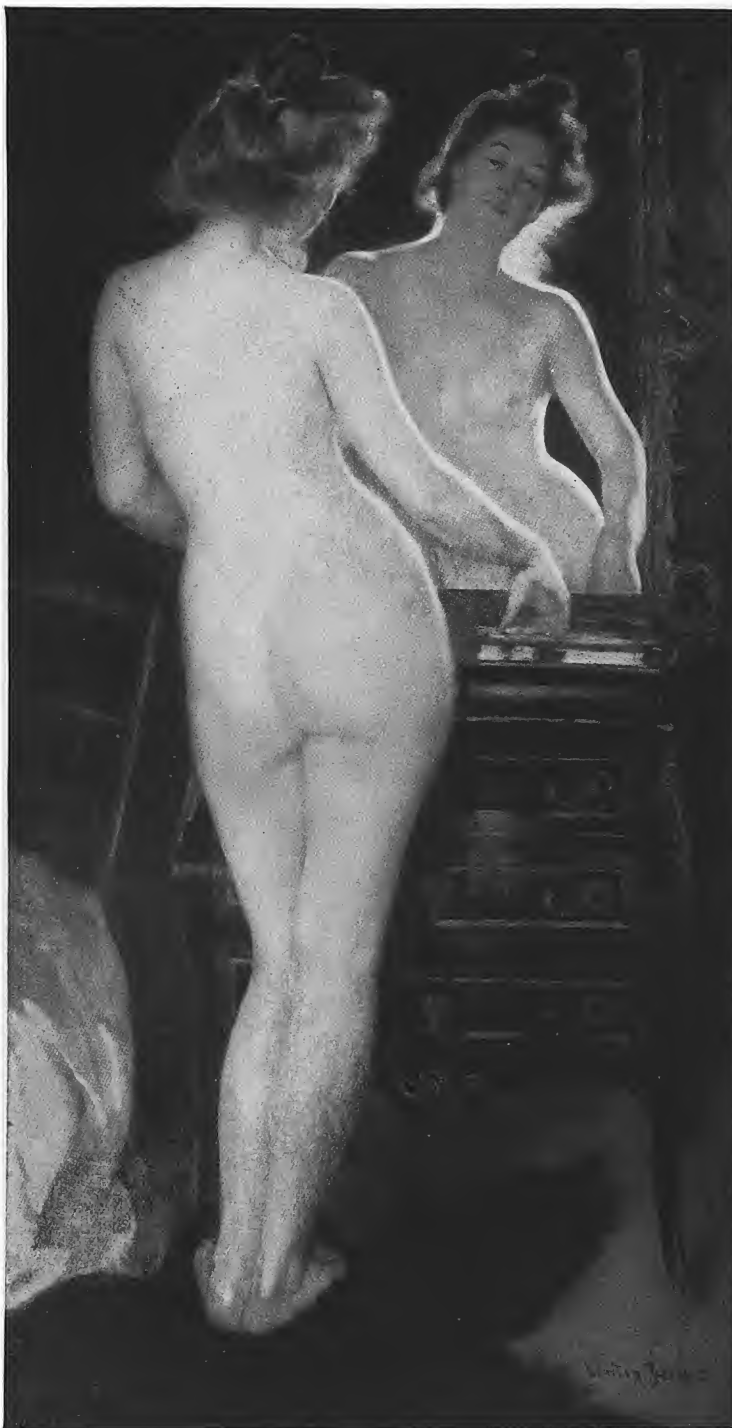
"As he carries unaffectedness almost to the point of affectation, there never was a man whose habit of life offered less pegs to hang eccentric little anecdotes on than his. You could cross the ocean in the same stateroom with him and never guess that he was a painter at all, or any other person of a temperamental sort. No one ever saw him in peg-top corduroy trousers or a



YOUTH AND SPRING
By LAWTON PARKER

Byronic shirt. He does not talk art to you, nor gesture with his thumb. Indeed it is quite possible that you might talk art to him—tell him all about it. He would listen, in his quiet, unassuming way, perfectly will-

ing to learn from you, if there happened to be anything you could teach him (and it is surprising how many people he can learn something from), but just as willing to be amused, all by himself, if there wasn't.



MY MODEL
By LAWTON PARKER

Honorable Mention Paris Salon 1900

"MY MODEL"

—A life sized nude painting, completed in a week, which won an honorable mention in the Paris Solon, 1900.

(See page 245.)



MRS. LEONARD WOODS OF PITTSBURGH
By LAWTON PARKER

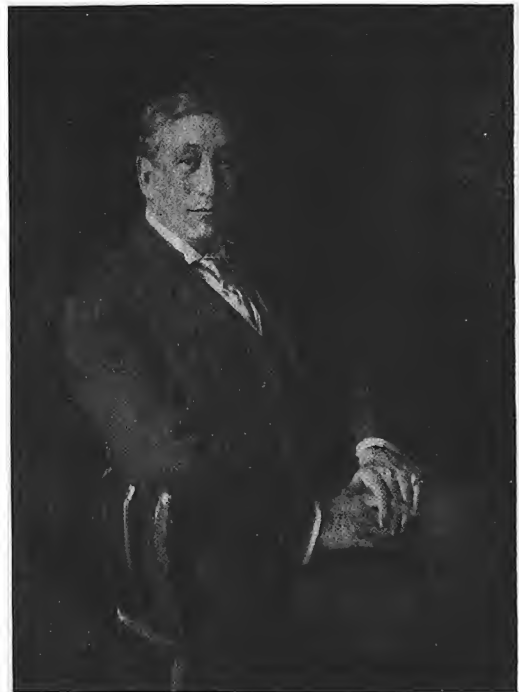
Third Medal Paris Salon 1902

"I do not believe that in any essential way his attitude toward life can have changed a particle since, a boy in his teens, he won a little prize offered by the Interior for the best drawing by a person who had had no artistic instruction. He was living out in Kearney, Neb., then, and the nearest artistic instruction was a long way off. One of the artists on the jury of this competition was enough impressed by the effort he sent in to write him saying that if he would come to Chicago he would give him some instruction free.

"The boy came, and presently won a scholarship at the art institute. When the scholarship expired—he still was younger than most children are when they are graduated from high school—he calmly went out west again to earn some more money to buy more instruction.

"I hope that some day he will tell me his odyssey in chronological detail. I know he used to paint portraits for \$5 apiece, doing, when business was brisk, sometimes three a day. You had to make a recognizable likeness, of course, or you didn't get your five dollars, and I may observe that many a highly successful portrait painter of mature years and training would have his troubles earning a living that way in the communities young Parker visited.

"Another thing he did in Kansas City was to paint a big decoration on the outside of a building. He got the job because the artist who started it neglected to allow for the distortion caused by the high angle at which you had to look at it from the street



PORTRAIT OF DAVID R. FORGAN
By LAWTON PARKER

and quit in despair. He was paid a huge sum for this—\$75, if I remember right. (He remarked to me once he had painted Kansas City inside and out. You can take that as figuratively or as literally as you like.)

"When he had earned enough, he went to New York and studied some more. Eventually he won the Chanler \$5,000 prize and went to Paris, for when I said he was intensely an American American I did not mean he was of the flag-waving variety that thinks we have a providential license to lick all creation at anything we turn our hand to. It seemed to young Parker that Paris offered stiffer criticism and a more cosmopolitan point of view than any other city. And, intent on getting the stiffest criticism possible, he chose Paris for his instructress and, while he was about it, the stiffest schools in Paris—the Beaux Arts and the Julien—and later he became a pupil and, incidentally, the close friend of Whistler. In all of this he was actuated by one perfectly steadfast idea. 'Learn your technique first,' Parker's good angel kept saying. 'The first business of a painter is to learn to paint. You will see half-trained men jumping into the limelight on the strength of a trick of style—some fancied originality or other—getting called arrives, while you are still thought of as a student. Never mind that. Learn to paint first.'

"That was the voice he listened to; and presently this stood him in good stead. He had planned his first important exhibition in public for the Paris exposition in 1900. He had a canvas finished, framed, varnished, ready to send to the jury. But a little four-inch stovepipe that made its way precariously around two sides of his big studio, from the corner where his stove was to the diagonal corner where it escaped into a chimney, had got choked with soot, and the night before the picture was to be sent away the soot burned through the pipe,

trickled down across the picture, burning clean through the canvas and ruining the frame. The entries for the exposition closed that day.

"But the entries for that year's salon did not close until a week later. Parker ordered a new frame, bought a new canvas, hired a new model, and went to work. The long, arduous technical training did not fail him now. In this week he completed a life-sized standing nude [*My Model*] that won him an honorable mention in the salon. Two years later, he won his third medal with a portrait.

"A second medal was within easy reach. A few big important canvases exhibited on successive years would have landed it. But Parker was still learning. Up to now he was a studio painter. All the outdoor work he had done was the more or less desultory sketching with which one occupies a holiday. Now he tacked plein air in earnest. He went on painting portraits. That was his profession. But in his water garden in Giverny he began studying the full outdoor light on things; how foliage and dresses and naked human flesh look against the light, down the light, across the light.

"For ten years he sent nothing to the salon beyond an occasional portrait. Then a rainy summer drove him indoors again, and he painted a salon picture. Presumably his good angel told him to go ahead. He had learned to paint as comparatively few men in this generation have even tried to learn, and what happened was that the salon jury, instead of awarding him a second medal which he half expected—the medal which has already been awarded to just ten American painters and is the highest award that any painter not a Frenchman has ever received—voted him a first or gold medal, the highest award of all.

"He has come the whole distance modestly, patiently, American fashion, on his own feet."